

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00
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O R 121831Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7274
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE
INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM
AMCONSUL DURBAN
AMEMBASSY GABORONE
AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG
AMEMBASSY LAGOS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MAPUTO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 961

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 1)

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: WA, SF, PORG
SUBJ: NAMIBIA: NEXT STEPS

REF: USUN 1923

1. WHILE WE ARE INCLINED TO ACCEPT THERE WAS DISAGREEMENT
IN THE SAG OVER THE DECISION TO UNDERTAKE THE MAY 4 RAID
INTO ANGOLA, MOST LIKELY DIFFERENCES CONCERNED PRIMARILY
THE TIMING AND SCALE OF THE ACTION RATHER THAN THE
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CONCEPT. WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED NO QUESTIONING OF THE
PROPOSITION THAT THERE WAS A NEED FOR SOUTH FRICA TO DO
SOMETHING FORCEFUL ABOUT THE ESCALATION IN SWAPO CROSS-
BORDER GUERRILLA ACTIVITY. LOOKING AT THE POSSIBLE CONSEQ-
UENCES, THERE ARE THOSE IN THE SAG WHO ARE ANXIOUS ABOUT
THE POLITICAL COST, THOSE WHO WOULD NOT BE UNHAPPY TO
SEE THE WESTERN PROPOSAL FOUNDER, AND A CURIOUS THIRD

VIEW THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAS IN A WAY SIEZED THE MILITARY, POLITICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL INITIATIVE. IN HER SUNDAY (MAY 7) COLUMN, WELL- CONNECTED FLEUR DE VILLIERS QUOTES UNNAMED (BUT WE SUSPECT GOVT) SOURCES AS ASSERTING THAT SOUTH AFRICA HAS ACHIEVED "A PERFECT BALANCE BETWEEN MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC OFFENSIVES." SAG-OWNED SABC EDITORIAL COMMENTARY THE FOLLOWING DAY TOOK THE "PERFECT-BALANCE" VIEW.

2. WHATEVER MAY BE THE SOUTH AFRICAN VIEW OF THE RAID AND ITS CONSEQUENCES, THERE ARE FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE TWO PRINCIPAL THREATS TO THE PROCESS OF RESTORING MOMENTUM TO THE WESTERN PROPOSAL AND BRINGING SWAPO AROUND TO AGREEMENT.

3. FIRST THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY OF A SWAPO EFFORT TO RECOUP PSYCHOLOGICALLY THROUGH A SIGNIFICANT MILITARY OR TERRORIST ACTION INSIDE NAMIBIA. THE SOUTH AFRICAN MILITARY COMMAND HAS PUBLICLY STATED IT EXPECTS SUCH AN EFFORT (CAPE TOWN 936) AND THE SAG HAS WARNED THAT IT WILL HIT BACK. AS REPORTED CAPE TOWN 931, VAN HEERDEN STRESSED TO US MAY 8 THAT SAG POLICY WILL HENCEFORTH BE ONE OF RETALIATION AGAINST SWAPO BASES IN ANGOLA IN RESPONSE TO ANY NEW MAJOR SWAPO MOVES INSIDE NAMIBIA. CONCEIVABLY, A TIT-FOR-TAT SCENARIO COULD DEVELOP WITH ALL THAT IMPLIES, INCLUDING PRESUMABLY THE POSSIBILITY OF DEEPER CUBAN INVOLVEMENT.
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4. SECONDLY, THERE IS THE THREAT OF NEAR-TERM POLITICAL ACTION BY THE SAG, POSSIBLY THE SETTING OF A DEAD-LINE FOR SWAPO ACCEPTANCE OR SOME INITIAL IF PROVISIONAL STEP TOWARD ELECTIONS. BRAND FOURIE TOLD BRITISH AMBASSADOR SIR DAVID SCOTT ON MAY 9 THAT PRIME MINISTER VORSTER WAS RECOMMENDING THAT SOUTH AFRICA SHOULD DO NOTHING FURTHER POLITICALLY FOR "SEVERAL WEEKS", BUT IF SWAPO HAD STILL NOT ACCEPTED THE PROPOSAL AFTER "TWO OR THREE WEEKS", THE SAG WOULD PROBABLY MOVE AHEAD WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WESTERN PROPOSAL. FOURIE DID NOT DEFINE HOW VORSTER PROPOSED TO DO THIS.

5. IF VORSTER'S VIEW WAS ACCURATELY REPORTED BY FOURIE, IT APPEARS THE SAG MAY RESTRAIN ITSELF, POLTICALLY AT LEAST, FOR TWO OR THREE WEEKS. AGAIN, IF FOURIE IS RIGHT (CAPE TOWN 940), PRESSURE FOR ACTION WILL LIKELY MOUNT. IT WILL PROBABLY COME FROM THE DTA, THOSE NOT INTERESTED IN THE WESTERN PROPOSAL, AND THOSE WHO WANT TO MOVE IN ANY EVENT BEFORE SWAPO RECOVERS PSYCHOLOGICALLY.

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C O N F I D E N T A L SECTION 2 OF 2 CAPE TOWN 961

6. WE MUST MOVE PROMPTLY TO TRY TO HEAD OFF THESE THREATS.
WE PROBABLY HAVE LITTLE IMMEDIATE PROSPECT OF BRINGING ABOUT
EFFECTIVE AFRICAN CONSTRAINT IN SWAPO'S GUERRILLA ACTIVITIES
OR OF DETERING SAG RETALIATION IF SUCH ACTIVITIES OCCUR
ON A LARGE SCALE. CONSEQUENTLY, IT IS URGENT TO RESTORE
MOMENTUM TO THE WESTERN PROPOSAL VIA AFRICAN PRESSURE ON
SWAPO TO RETURN VERY SOON TO SERIOUS AND DEFINITIVE
TALKS ON THE PROPOSAL. FOR THE WESTERN APPROACH TO THE
AFRICANS TO HAVE A REASONABLE CHANCE OF SUCCESS, SOUTH
AFRICA WILL NEED TO TAKE POSITIVE STEPS TO DEMONSTRATE
ITS GOOD FAITH. WE WILL IN ADDITION NO DOUBT NEED TO
OFFER SOME CONCESSIONS TO SWAPO.
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7. ONLY AS A VERY LAST RESORT SHOULD WE CONSIDER SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES IN THE SETTLEMENT PACKAGE. VORSTER ALMOST CERTAINLY WILL REJECT ANY REOPENING OF THE PROPOSAL; HE WILL NOT BE MOVED BY THE ARGUMENT THAT THE SAG HAD BROUGHT ABOUT A NEW SITUATION WITH ITS MAY 4 RAID.

8. IN ADDITION TO PUTTING FORWARD OUR PROPOSED POSITION ON WALVIS BAY, TWO OTHER POSSIBLE CONCESSIONS OCCUR TO US WHICH WOULD NOT REQUIRE CHANGING THE PROPOSAL AS IT IS BUT WOULD RELATE TO SWAPO'S SECURITY CONCERNS:

--AN UNDERTAKING BY THE WESTERN GOVTS THAT THEY WOULD SUPPORT IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL A FIGURE OF 5,000 OR MORE UN MILITARY FORCES FOR NAMIBIA IF THE SYG SHOULD BELIEVE SUCH NUMBERS NECESSARY.

--A COMMITMENT BY THE SAG THAT IT WOULD LIMIT ITS RESIDUAL FORCES TO CONFINEMENT AT GROOTFONTEIN, THUS ABANDONING THE OPTION OF MAINTAINING TROOPS IN OSHIVELLO DURING THE TRANSITION PERIOD. THIS WOULD REMOVE THE SAG RESIDUAL FORCE COMPLETELY FROM OVAMBO AND PLACE IT FURTHER SOUTH THAN WOULD HAVE OTHERWISE BEEN THE CASE IF THE SAG HAD EMPLOYED ITS OSHIVELLO OPTION. IT WOULD NOT HAVE TO BE UNDERTAKEN BY THE SAG AS A CONCESSION BUT RATHER AS A DECISION TO KEEP ALL ITS RESIDUAL FORCES WHERE THERE ARE FULL FACILITIES RATHER THAN LEAVING SOME AT THE ILL-EQUIPPED OSHIVELLO LOCALITY.

9. THE CONTACT GROUP MAY WISH TO CONSIDER A MESSAGE TO BOTH FROM THE FIVE FOREIGN MINISTERS MAKING THE POINTS SET OUT IN PARA 5A OF REFTTEL. IF SUCH A MESSAGE WERE DELIVERED PERSONALLY BY ONE OR TWO MEMBERS OF THE NEW YORK CONTACT GROUP IT WOULD HAVE GREATER EFFECT. AT THE SAME TIME THESE EMISSARIES COULD EXPLORE WITH THE SAG THE STEPS

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WE EXPECT FROM IT AND THE UNDERTAKING REGARDING OSHIVELLO. SUBSEQUENTLY, THE CG REPS COULD GET OUR MESSAGE DIRECTLY TO STEYN AND THE NAMIBIANS AS WELL AND PERHAPS HAVE OCCASION TO TALK WITH SWAPO IN LUSAKA. WE THINK IT IS ESPECIALLY IMPORTANT TO IMPRESS ON STEYN AND THE NAMIBIAN GROUPS THE SITUATION IN WHICH WE NOW FIND OURSELVES. AND IT IS HIGHLY DESIRABLE TO UNDERSCORE TO STEYN IN PARTICULAR THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESERVING AND BUILDING HIS IMAGE OF SINCERITY AND IMPARTIALITY.

NELSON

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